

## ***MICHIGAN STATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY***

### **A Culture of Excellence**

First and foremost, MSHDA will have a culture in which we all are dedicated to our mission, to improving the lives of the people of Michigan. Each of us should have people in our minds as we work.

Our culture must provide frequent opportunities for every staff member to experience the fruits of our labor, to see the faces of our beneficiaries on our walls, to visit completed housing projects, to hear from, and speak to, the people we are here to serve: first-time homebuyers, the elderly, working families trying to keep their heads above water, the homeless, the poor, and persons with special needs. And we must reach a place where we can see that all of our acts are intended to deliver on our mission, or to increase the potential of MSHDA, or to increase our partner's potentials to improve people's lives.

Of equal importance to our focus on mission, each of MSHDA's employees must be able to feel and see that she is valued, and that her contribution makes a positive difference to the people we serve. This means that each employee will be provided the following:

- An environment that nurtures growth through training and mentoring
- The opportunity to serve on teams, performing meaningful work
- Recognition and appreciation individually for their contribution
- Participation on teams that are empowered to tackle challenging tasks with delegated authority where appropriate
- Leadership opportunities
- An environment in which all ideas are encouraged and heard, and the value of inclusion is supported
- An environment that promotes fun in the workplace
- An environment that promotes employee wellness and benefits, including social activities

Our culture must be one in which all staff share a common understanding of where we are going. We must focus on following a plan with goals we strive to achieve, strategies we agree to implement, and methods for measuring our success. Our system for implementation will include the following elements:

- Five-Year Action Plan with clear goals and strategies
- Divisional and Functional Team Work Plans
- Annual Goals and Performance Measures

Every employee has been given the opportunity to help create MSHDA's vision, our roadmap for the next five years. MSHDA employees will also help to create our annual work plan, establish annual goals and create our performance measures.

Our culture must be customer-centric. If we cannot be responsive to the needs of our customers, we are bureaucrats. We must focus on the needs of our customers and our ability to meet them. We must regularly ask ourselves if we act with speed, if we are flexible where possible, if we can change direction quickly when circumstances demand. Our job cannot

solely be to explain to our customers why they must do things the way we tell them. Instead, we must see ourselves as advocates, working together with our partners, to accomplish more for the benefit of the people we are here to serve. On a continual basis, staff must be motivated and empowered to improve our processes, and streamline whenever possible to reduce requirements which are unrelated to mission. Ours must be an anti-bureaucracy culture. To that end, ours must be a culture that embraces change, and promotes innovation and entrepreneurship. This implies that our senior managers will encourage and empower line staff to explore opportunities to improve the way in which we conduct business.

Our culture must be one which challenges itself to make more deals happen, to disburse resources faster, to require only what we need of our partners. We must continually listen to our partners; we must measure their satisfaction of our performance. This must be done in a fashion that is consistent with our focus on mission.

Ours must be a culture in which all of us understand that we will attain our greatest potential only if we allow staff at all levels to make great contributions. Teams, workgroups, and committees must be designed in recognition of the fact that assigning senior managers to oversee them can stunt the growth and creativity of staff, thereby diminishing our collective ability to grow, along with the ability to attain a higher level of performance. Our culture must also allow employees, at all levels, opportunities to lead. They may lead as team members, by providing recommendations for improving processes, by acting as ambassadors out in the community, and by making presentations to partners. And they must see themselves as leaders.

Our culture must show that we understand, and place a high priority on, the importance of collective action, of collaborating with organizations and agencies for the benefit of the people we serve. Collaboration allows MSHDA to work with the Area Agencies on Aging to bring more hot meals to the elderly in our portfolio, to work with the Department of Human Services and the Michigan Housing Council to bring child care to our family housing, to work with local mental health providers and emergency shelters so the chronically homeless are moved from living in shelters to their own apartments with the supports they need and choose, to work with the Community Economic Development Association of Michigan, the asset building coalitions and Habitat for Humanity to achieve more homeownership opportunities for very low income families, to work with the Community Action Agencies, municipalities, and our state agency partners to revitalize Michigan's downtowns, to work with owners and managers to assure tenants enjoy the highest quality housing and to work with our agents to assure that our housing vouchers serve as a resource to keep Michigan's poorest citizens from ending up on our streets. And we collectively, and individually, must continually reinforce to our external partners the extraordinary virtues and power of working together as one single affordable housing community. Our culture must support an understanding of the primacy of collaboration because, without it, we are a shell of who we can become

Last, our culture must allow each of us to be visionaries, to challenge ourselves to see a future that is better for the people we serve than we have previously been able to foresee. And to know the pieces of our vision which each of us, and each of our partners brings, combined together, creates our greatest vision and represents our collective potential to make Michigan a more humane and caring community.